

ERC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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PROGRAM GOALS

The primary goal of the Evening Reporting Center (ERC) is, as follows:

- Reduce the number of youth in detention at the Juvenile Justice Intervention Center and to minimize their time spent in secure detention.

Program objectives are to:

- Enroll pre-adjudicated youth in the Evening Reporting Center (ERC),
- Provide safe and structured activities to youth participants Monday through Friday between 4pm and 8pm,
- Provide interventions rooted in evidence-based practices to prevent new system contacts during enrollment in the ERC,
- Provide youth with reminders via face to face contacts and/or other electronic means at regular intervals to increase the likelihood that youth will appear in court,
- Connect youth/ family with appropriate, and longer-term community-based services.

ENROLLMENT

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered for participation in the ERC, youth must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Youth is between the ages of 14 and 17 years old,
- Youth resides in Orleans Parish,
- Youth receives a RAI score of 15+
- Youth is pending adjudication, and a petition has been filed to bring charges against the potential participant.

The ERC is best positioned to serve youth who:

- Who are at risk of further involvement in the Juvenile Justice System
- Have some unmet service needs, and would benefit from positive connections to community-based services while they are awaiting their court date, and
- Have significant amounts of unsupervised, unstructured time.

EXCLUSIONS

The following circumstances will exclude a young person from participating in the ERC program:

- Youth who are awaiting a competency hearing, or have severe and/or untreated mental health or substance abuse issues that warrant a therapeutic or clinical setting,
- Youth who are currently charged with "crimes of violence" as defined in R.S. 14:2 (B),
- Youth who have prior convictions for sexual assault, rape, or murder,
- Youth who recently absconded from placement,
- Youth who are concurrently enrolled in another alternative to detention programs, and
- Youth who reside outside of Orleans Parish,

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REFERRAL PROCESS

Orleans Parish Juvenile Court (OPJC) judges will directly refer potential participants to the ERC program

Each Judge will appoint a court liaison within their courtroom to assist with facilitating the referral process in coordination with ERC staff. Youth/Family will receive an ERC brochure which will describe the function of the ERC and will have the first appointment date on the brochure. At the time of referral, the following information will be given to ERC program staff:

- A Referral form for the ERC program, which will include at a minimum: contact information for the youth and their guardian, the time for their first appointment with the ERC, their next scheduled court date, the section of court that young person will be appearing in, relevant arrest or delinquency history, and the name and contact information for the individual making the referral;
- A copy of any appropriate risk assessment or needs assessment (if available); and
- A copy of the Judgement from Juvenile Court (if available).

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If any of the essential information listed above is not available at the time the referral is made, or the potential participant does not meet the eligibility criteria mentioned earlier in this document, ERC staff may notify OPJC that the ERC staff are not able to accept the referral "as is." In this case, ERC staff will await further information regarding the participant referral or move on to processing the next referral made by OPJC. In the event that the ERC staff review all referral information and determine the placement is not in accordance with the eligibility requirements established in this policy and procedure manual, ERC staff shall notify OPJC that they are unable to accept the referral.

Once the completed referral information form has been received, ERC staff will meet with youth and family on first appointment date that was set in court to complete the enrollment process. If the ERC staff are unable to make face to face contact or otherwise not able to complete the enrollment, youth will be rescheduled to complete enrollment the next day. Youth will begin program the following day.

If youth and family fail to show up for first day of participation, ERC staff will make an attempt to reach out to the youth and their families with the intention of having the young person begin regularly attending the ERC program within the next 24 hours. If the ERC staff are unable to make face-to-face contact or otherwise not able to complete the enrollment process with the young person or their parent/guardian within three business days, ERC staff will communicate this information to OPJC in order to reassess the needs of the family and the appropriateness of the ERC program and await further instructions. ERC staff will not hold a spot for this youth and will receive the next referral from OPJC..

Once the participant, their parent/guardian, and ERC staff have completed the enrollment process necessary for the youth to begin their participation in the ERC program, youth will be expected to report to the program the next day. ERC staff will notify OPJC of case acceptance and youth start date.

CAPACITY

The ERC has capacity to serve 15 young people per nine week cycle.

If at any point in time the ERC is at capacity, youth will be placed on a waiting list that will be kept up-to-date and managed by court liaison. The ERC will notify the court liaison once a space has become available for the ERC program, and it will be the responsibility of OPJC to refer an eligible and appropriate youth participant (according to the previously listed criteria).

The ERC staff will communicate regularly with the appropriate OPJC point person about the number of youth who are active in the ERC program, in order to notify OPJC when the program has reached its capacity or when there are new slots that have become open.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

DURATION AND TERMINATION

Youth referred to the ERC will participate between 30 and 45 days depending on their needs, or until there is a change in the charges brought against them that would cause them to no longer be under the supervision of Juvenile Court. Any example of some of the changes that would trigger a discharge from ERC include (but are not limited to):

- Their case is no longer moving forward in OPJC,
- Their case is dismissed by their Judge,
- Their case is waived to Criminal District Court, and
- They are adjudicated.

ERC and OPJC staff may also extend a young person's participation in the program up to a maximum of 60 days. Both parties must agree that program extension is in the best interest of the young person and/or public safety. In the event that there is disagreement between the two parties, program duration will default to 45 days. Under no circumstances will participation be extended beyond 60 days.

A review of each young person's readiness for exit will be conducted on or before their 20th day of participation. During this review, ERC program staff will meet with the young person as well as their parent/guardian (if possible). When appropriate, ERC staff will attempt to engage other naturally supportive adults and stakeholders in the absence of the parent/guardian. During the meeting ERC staff will review:

- Relevant information pertaining to the young person's participation in the ERC program,
- Any needs for continued community-based services (following their participation), and
- Any relevant updates in their case in OPJC.

If a parent/guardian is not able to participate in their child's review meeting with ERC staff, ERC staff will attempt to communicate (via phone or face-to-face) the information discussed in the meeting with the parent.

Following this review meeting, ERC staff will also submit a recommendation of program discharge to the OPJC point person. ERC staff will move ahead with discharging the youth on their projected termination date – which will typically occur 20 days after program engagement – unless an extension to 45 days has been mutually agreed upon. The following are examples of factors that will influence the decision to allow a youth to complete the program at 30 days or participate up until 45 days:

- Attendance and participation in the ERC program,
- Status of the young person's case in OPJC, and
- Status of any referral to external service providers.

30 DAY COMPLETION

For instance, youth who will be discharged at 30 days may be:

- Youth whose participation and engagement in the program has been regular and consistent with few (and mostly excused) absences,
- Youth who have established connections to external services, if needed,
- Youth who have refrained from any further significant involvement in the justice system, and
- Youth who have maintained all court appointments and met other court obligations.

45 DAY COMPLETION

For instance, youth who will be discharged at 45 days may be:

- Youth who struggled with regular and consistent participation and engagement in the program, with several absences (whether they are excused or unexcused),
- Youth who may still need more time and assistance with connecting to external services,
- Youth who have had additional arrests or involvement in the justice system during their program participation that were not serious enough to warrant detention and/or program termination, and
- Youth who may need some continued support in order to maintain their court appointments and other court obligations.

COMMUNICATION WITH OPJC

ERC program staff will submit regular reports to the appropriate point person for each of the sections of OPJC, which in most cases will be the person who originally made the referral to the ERC program.

ERC program staff will submit monthly progress reports for each participant. The progress reports will include information on each participant's ERC participation, Justice System involvement, education information, and information on any service referrals.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

DATA CAPTURE

ERC staff will regularly report information to the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination (OCJC), as well as OPJC as appropriate. The following list of program data and performance measures is not exhaustive, and additional measures may be requested from ERC staff. Any requests for additional data must be made in writing, at least 30 days prior to when the information is needed.

DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURES (RESPONSIBILITY OF OPJC)

- Petition Offense
- Participant Race/Ethnicity
- Participant Gender
- Participant Age
- Zip Code of Participant's Residence
- Household Income (necessary data for reducing food costs)
- Arrest History
- Participant Educational/Employment status

OPERATIONAL MEASURES (RESPONSIBILITY OF ERC STAFF)

- # of youth enrolled – monthly totals
- # of successful completions – monthly total
 - Successful completion is defined as youth who are not rearrested and successfully appear to court during their enrollment in the ERC program.
- # of unsuccessful completions – monthly totals (including the reason the completion was unsuccessful)
- #/% Attendance
- # of youth connected to community-based services while enrolled in ERC

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Failure To Appear (FTA) while enrolled in ERC (ERC staff)
- FTA over life of case and/or within six months of program completion (OPJC)
- Participants Rearrested while enrolled in ERC (ERC staff/OCJC)
- Rearrests over life of case and/or within six months of program completion (OPJC)
- Youth Satisfaction, as measured by surveys at program exit (ERC staff)
- Parent Satisfaction, as measured by surveys at program exit (ERC staff)

PUBLIC REPORTING

- Quarterly reports to the Sandy Krasnoff New Orleans Criminal Justice Council or one of its subgroups

GENERAL OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

STAFFING

The staffing structure for the ERC program will include both full-time staff and part-time staff, in order to ensure there is adequate supervision for young people while they are onsite, as well as ensure there is sufficient staffing capacity to facilitate connections to community-based services for youth and their families.

The ERC program will ensure that youth are directly supervised by ERC staff at all times of program operation.

- Full-time staff will include:
 - ERC Program Manager, who will:
 - Function as the primary liaison between the ERC program and OPJC,
 - Ensure a seamless referral process with OPJC staff, youth, and their family,
 - Complete enrollment/intake process for all incoming youth
 - Assign youth to Coach/Case Management staff,
 - Ensure Coach/Case Management staff, youth, and their family develop a Youth Individual Service Plan (YISP),
 - Monitor and manage the waiting list and inform OPJC staff of openings,
 - Identify and implement data input system,
 - Develop and maintain the weekly schedule of activities,
 - Review YISP with Coach/Case Manager staff to ensure progress of youth and family goals, and
 - Assist with the supervision of youth while they are at the ERC program site, as needed
 - Supervise Coach/Case Management staff

- Meet with Executive Director weekly to ensure program goals are met
- ERC Coach/Case Manager, who will:
 - Establish individual and group relationships with youth assigned to their team,
 - Develop YISP with youth and family during the intake process,
 - Connect youth and family to community-based services,
 - Provide individualized case management to youth and family in the ERC program to ensure attendance and participation in community-based services,
 - Assist with the facilitation of evening group activities,
 - Document all necessary data in the data system,
 - Assist with transportation of participants to and from the ERC program, and
 - Supervise youth while they are at the ERC program site.
- Part-time staff will include:
 - Executive Director, who will:
 - Implement start-up of the ERC,
 - Identify, interview, and hire experienced staff,
 - Oversee the day to day operation of the ERC program and staff,
 - Provide training to all ERC staff,
 - Interface with OPJC and other stakeholders as necessary and appropriate,
 - Vet and confirm appropriateness and effectiveness of community-based services youth will be referred to,
 - Develop a resource manual based on identified community-based services in hot spot areas, and
 - Ensure evaluation measures are in place.
 - ERC Coach/Case Manager, who will:
 - Provide case management services to youth and families assigned to coach support group/caseload,
 - Ensure youth and their family has been referred and connected with community support services,
 - Monitor supportive services activities/involvement, and
 - Provide one on one sessions with youth.

All ERC staff within the ERC program will receive orientation to the Family Center of Hope's internal policies and procedures and the policy and procedures governing the ERC program. Staff will complete a background check before hire. Staff will receive ongoing staff development and other training relevant to juvenile justice, alternative to detention best practices, and crisis intervention.

Onsite security will also be present on site at the ERC. ERC staff will contract with an external entity to provide the security staff that will be present at the ERC.

TRANSPORTATION

At the time of a young person's initial engagement in the ERC program, ERC staff in partnership with the youth participant and their parent/guardian will assess what the best method of transport is for each individual young person. Upon agreeing to the most realistic and efficient method of transportation for a newly enrolled young person, the ERC staff, young person, and parent/guardian will agree on a transportation plan.

Generally, a young person's transportation plan will consist of one of the following modes of transportation:

- Drop off/Pick Up by ERC Staff,
- Drop off/Pick Up by Parent/Guardian,
- Drop off by School Bus, or
- Some combination of the preceding transportation options.

The ERC staff will provide transportation to youth enrolled in the program both to and from the ERC program site, as needed.

- ERC staff will begin picking up youth from their schools starting at approximately 3:00pm, in order to arrive to the ERC program staff between 4:00 and 4:15pm for the start of the evening programming.
- All ERC staff will have a valid Louisiana Driver's License with a clean driving record.
- ERC staff will transport youth in their own vehicles or a provider owned vehicle, either of which will be insured, fit for the purpose of transporting youth, well maintained, and safe.
- ERC staff will only drop youth off at their home. Any changes to the location at which youth should be dropped off after ERC program must be submitted to ERC staff by a parent/guardian at least two business days in advance.

If a parent/guardian would like to transport their child on their own (either to or from the ERC program), this agreement may be set at the point of initial program engagement or revisited at any point during the youth's participation in the ERC program.

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- Any changes or adjustments to the parent/guardian's involvement in the initially agreed upon transportation plan must be submitted to ERC staff in writing at least two business days before the activation of the new transportation plan.
- Any transportation plan that includes the involvement of a parent/guardian may include up to three designated individuals who are approved to pick up or drop off the participant. Any changes made to this set of designated individuals, must be submitted in writing at least two business days in advance. All designated individual must be over 21 years old.
- If parents opt to transport their child to and/or from the ERC program, they will not be allowed to drop their child off at the program site any earlier than 4:00pm, and they will not be able to pick them up from the program site any earlier than 8:00pm.

If it is deemed possible and most appropriate for the young person to arrive to the program site by taking the school bus, it will be the joint responsibility of the ERC staff and parent/guardian to coordinate these transportation arrangements for the young person – recognizing that the parent/guardian is the only individual legally able to make this request of the school that their child attends. Following the young person's completion of the program, the parent will be responsible for updating their child's school that they no longer need to be dropped off at the ERC program site.

Exceptions/Exclusions:

- There will be no young people who arrive at or leave from the ERC on their own with no adult supervision (e.g. arriving on public transportation, walking, riding a bike), and
- Youth will not be allowed to leave with any individual that is not listed as a designated individual to transport them.

The ERC program would like to preserve and support any positive connections that youth have to existing extra-curricular or afterschool activities. Therefore, any youth or families who identify preexisting activities that occur

between the hours of 3:00pm and 8:00pm during the initial enrollment process will have the schedule of these activities factored into the establishment of their transportation plan and YISP. Because the nature and duration of afterschool activities vary, their situation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. However some general guidelines apply:

- If an activity occurs at the young person's school, they should remain at their school until the activity is completed, and then be transported to the ERC program site for the remainder of the evening.
- The ERC staff may require the ability to make contact with the supervising adults at the afterschool activity that a young person is participating in, or visit the young person while they are in the activity.
- If the preexisting afterschool activity is canceled or rescheduled, the youth and/or guardian should notify the ERC staff immediately.
- If for some reason the youth is not actively engaging in the afterschool activity, or the afterschool activity is fostering a situation that poses a risk for a young person to be involved in further delinquent activities, the ERC staff may require the youth attend the ERC in place of the preexisting afterschool activity.

COURT APPEARANCES

ERC staff will coordinate with OPJC in order to maintain accurate information on the schedule for court appearances for all ERC participants and their families. ERC staff will encourage and support youth and their parents/guardians in several ways related to the ability to successfully attend their scheduled court appearances, which includes:

- Youth will mark the court date board upon first day of ERC attendance and every day afterwards,
- ERC coach/case manager will monitor youths' activity on the court date board as reminders,
- ERC coach/case manager will make personal phone call reminders, if necessary, and
- ERC coach/case manager will offer transportation assistance to youth and families if needed. If coach/case manager and/or other staff are not available to transport, coach/case manager will call an Uber driver to pick up youth and their parent/guardian. An Uber driver will also return a youth and their family home from court as necessary and appropriate.

ERC staff will not make a regular practice of appearing in court with ERC participants and their families.

FOOD

Food will be provided every day of the ERC program to every young person who is enrolled and attending. The ERC staff will have healthy snacks for youth that are made available to young people at designated times in the daily schedule. The ERC program will also serve a meal each evening that the program meets.

Youth who have any dietary restrictions should make the ERC staff aware of their needs upon enrolling in the program, and the ERC staff will make reasonable accommodations in order to meet their dietary restrictions.

HOURS

The hours of the onsite ERC program will be Monday through Friday, from 4:00pm until 8:00pm. The ERC staff anticipates starting to pick up youth participants at approximately 3:00pm, and dropping youth off at their homes until approximately 9:00pm following the conclusion of programming.

The ERC Executive Director, Program Manager, and Coach/Case Management staff will regularly work earlier during the day, during more "traditional" work hours and possible split schedules in order to perform assigned

staff responsibilities related to enrollment/intake, pre-test, assessments, case management and advocacy, community-based service referrals, data input, case documentation, stakeholders meetings, court appearances, and continual program planning.

ERC programming will not operate normally on major holidays and other days the provider organization is not open for business. Full-time ERC staff will remain available if crisis situations arise with young people during a day that the program is not open.

PROGRAMMING

The daily programming at the ERC will seek to incorporate a variety of activities, group discussions, guest speakers, soft skills training (both life skills and job readiness skills), tutoring and academic support, opportunities for individualized support, and occasional field trips. The structure and content of these activities will be focused on addressing topics relevant to the group of young people served by the program, as well as include contextualized information that will help to navigate young people away from deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The scheduled activities within the ERC will draw from promising practices based on the Family Center of Hope's existing project ReSTORE program model.

A typical schedule at the ERC will resemble the following:

Activity	Time
Youth Pick up	3:00 - 4:15pm
Check-in Activity	4:15 - 4:30pm
Homework, Tutoring & Snack	4:30 - 5:00pm
Enrichment Activity (Recreation, computer, individual focus, games, etc.)	5:00 - 6:00pm
Dinner and Clean up	6:00 - 6:30pm
Group Discussion/ Guest Speaker	6:30 - 7:30pm
Check out/ Wrap Up	7:30 - 7:55pm
Dismissal/ Transport Home	8:00 - 9:00pm

The daily schedule will be posted in a clearly visible location during normal program hours.

When the ERC staff plan a field trip or outing to be a part of the daily schedule, the ERC staff will send a notice to parents/guardians in order to inform them that their child will be off-site during the normal programming hours. Field trips during normal programming hours are within the scope of what is normal service delivery within the ERC program.

However, if there are any field trips that are planned for the participant that will fall outside of the normal programming hours, the ERC staff will seek out additional permission and consent from the young person's parent/guardian. Any youth participant whose parent/guardian does not consent to these types of extended hours field trips will remain at the program site in order to participate in activities more typical to the normal ERC daily schedule and be dismissed at the normal ERC time.

CONNECTION TO SERVICES

ERC supportive service staff will prioritize assessing the needs and making appropriate connections to community-based services during their participation in the ERC program. Understanding that all young people will possess slightly different needs, the ERC staff will provide supportive services to each youth participant and their families in three general phases:

- Assessment and Planning,
- Service Referral and Connection, and
- Service Monitoring and Follow Up.

If a youth is unable to engage with services due to the prohibitive cost of services or due to the distance of services from their home, this lack of engagement will not be considered “non-compliant” behavior or held against the youth when assessing their success in the ERC program.

ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

When youth first enter the ERC’s program, as a part of their initial enrollment ERC staff will meet with both youth and their families in order to review any existing assessment information as well as gather baseline information about some of the youth’s presenting needs and existing connections to services. Through this process, the ERC staff will establish a set of individual goals for each youth participant that will be included in the YISP.

While it is expected that each youth will have short- and long-term aspirations, the ERC coach/case manager will assist youth and family with establishing goals set within the context of the ERC program. Will connect youth and their families to community-based programs to assist them toward achieving their goals by the conclusion of the youth’s participation in the ERC program.

Following the assessment and discussion of potential goals for each young person, the ERC staff will establish a written YISP for each young person that will be monitored throughout their participation in the program.

SERVICE REFERRAL AND CONNECTION

Following the completion of a young person’s YISP, the ERC supportive service staff will begin to make any appropriate referrals and connections to community-based services for the young person and their family. Understating that the connection that youth have to the ERC program is temporary and short-term, the goal is making these connections to community-based services.

SERVICE MONITORING AND FOLLOW UP

As youth transition out of the ERC program, program staff will ensure that they have been connected to appropriate community-based services. As these connections are made during a youth’s participation in the ERC program, ERC staff will continue to monitor and support the youth’s participation with their additional service providers (e.g. assisting with transportation, coordinating information sharing, assisting with eligibility documentation).

Furthermore, after a young person exits the ERC program ERC staff will remain available to assist with further case management and coordination activities at the request of the youth and/or their parent/guardian.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information reported to OPJC will remain confidential between these two parties, and this information will not be released to any additional third party without the written consent of the youth and/or their parent/guardian.

Information reported OCJC as outcome and operation indicators will be reported in aggregate or anonymized with a unique identifier assigned to each youth participant.

Any information collected by ERC staff through the provision of services will be stored in either a secure web-based database or in a secure file storage cabinet.

ABSENCES AND VIOLATIONS

Youth will be required to attend the ERC program daily, and the following is a list of guidelines related to excused and unexcused absences:

- Two consecutive days of unexcused absences will be reported to OPJC. If an excusable reason for those absences is later provided to ERC staff, that information will also be reported to OPJC.
- Excused absences will include things like medical appointments, school parent/teacher conferences, sickness, and family emergencies. Excused absences do not include things like going to the movies or attending a birthday party unless given prior approval by ERC program staff. Written documentation will need to be provided for an absence to be excused. Only ERC program staff have authority to determine whether or not an absence is excusable.
- Five consecutive days of excused absences will be reported to OPJC.

Behavior issues during programming will mostly be handled by ERC staff internally. Any major concerns about a young person's participation and compliance within the ERC program will be reported through the regular schedule of reporting referenced earlier in this document.

If there are extreme behavior issues that require further intervention or early program termination, OPJC will be notified of the incident immediately. If there are a series of severe behavior issues that have not improved after graduated sanctions, ERC staff may determine that continued program participation is detrimental to the youth, other program participants, staff, and the program. If ERC staff make the decision to terminate a youth from the program, ERC staff will immediately notify OPJC staff.

